DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 334 257 TM 016 854

AUTHOR Zeller, Nancy
TITLE A New Use for New Journalism: Humanizing the Case Report.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 42p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Case Studies; *Data Analysis; Evaluation Methods; *Literary Devices; *New Journalism; *Social Science Research; Technical Writing; *Writing (Composition)
IDENTIFIERS *Naturalistic Research

ABSTRACT

It is argued that expressive writing strategies, particularly those used by New Journalists, may eventually serve as models for case reporting in social science research. New Journalism refers to a movement begun in the 1960's that strives to reveal the story hidden beneath surface facts. It involves the use of fictive techniques applied to the description of real events and real people. Many people have seen a strong connection between social science and New Journalism. The obvious similarities in the ways naturalistic inquirers and New Journalists gather and process information include challenging the positivist assumptions about the subjective nature of truth. Four sample case reports are included to illustrate possible applications of these techniques of New Journalism: (1) scene-by-scene construction; (2) character point of view; (3) third person point of view; and (4) full detailing of the status of participants. Among the limitations of the approach are problems of integrity, confidentiality, collection and analysis of data, and the temptations of straying into imaginative writing. The rhetoric of New Journalism is not yet an appropriate approach for case reports, but research may eventually support its feasibility. A 72-item list of references is included. (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED334257

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

NANCY ZELLER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A New Use for New Journalism: Humanizing the Case Report

Nancy Zeller

Academic Affairs
Indiana Commission for Higher Education
101 West Ohio Street, Suite 550
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Paper Presentation
at the 1991 Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association (AERA)

Chicago, April 6, 1991

TM016854

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Background

According to philosopher Thomas Kuhn, periods of normal science occur when scientists agree about what science is and how one does it. In periods of revolutionary science, when agreement doesn't prevail, scientific communication breaks down. At that point, the various scientific disciplines are, as rhetorician Charles Bazerman observes, "rife with misunderstanding and unresolvable conflict"--unresolvable because there is no common language that will "allow for determination of mutually acceptable criteria of adjudication." At this point "scientists start to argue like philosophers."[1]

In recent years, those who conduct research in education and the human sciences have increasingly disagreed about what their science is and how it is done. This revolution in research methodology has created two camps of inquirers deeply divided by the ways in which they apprehend the world. On the one hand are those researchers some call positivists, who support the application of the scientific method to research in the social sciences; on the other, the naturalists (more recently referred to as constructivists[2]), who conduct more qualitatively-oriented research. Many think of naturalistic inquiry as a type of research conducted in a "natural" setting rather than in a laboratory. While this distinction is true (naturalists do look at a phenomenon in its social, physical, biological, etc., context), it is inadequate as a definition for naturalistic inquiry because naturalistic inquiry is not a research method; it is, rather, a research methodology that stands in opposition to positivism.

Faced with the positivists' assumption of one, true reality knowable by studying its parts, the naturalist counters that there are multiple, intangible realities that can be studied only holistically (and, as in a

hologram, from each part the whole can be discovered or reconstructed). Such a study, according to Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, "raises more questions than it answers"[3] and is thus unlikely to result in prediction and control--the aim of the scientific method.

In addition, instead of attempting objectivity, the naturalist accepts an inevitable interactive relationship with the respondent: "knower and known are inseparable." Moreover, "the aim of inquiry is to develop an idiographic body of knowledge" which is time and context dependent--"in the form of working hypotheses that describe the individual case." The positivists' assumption of linear causality is seen by naturalists as artificial; "all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects;" indeed, causes and effects have no separate existence.

Finally, naturalists claim that inquiry is value-bound in several ways. It is influenced by the values of the inquirer and respondents, by the paradigm guiding the investigation, by the choice of substantive theory guiding the investigation, and by values inherent in the context--the location, the culture. All these values must resonate with each other.

Several implications emerge from these underlying assumptions about conducting naturalistic inquiry, the most important of which is that, instead of the traditional social science experimental research format, the preferred type of research for the naturalistic inquirer is the <u>case study</u>.

Understanding (rather than prediction and control) is a matter of importance to naturalists. It is the drive to understand, argues Robert E. Stake, that makes naturalistic case studies epistemologically in harmony with human experience.[4] To aid understanding, Lincoln and Guba recommend case study tactics with human dimensions:

- o a natural setting (versus a laboratory setting);
- o the human inquirer as the instrument used to assess phenomena;
- o qualitative (versus quantitative) methods--interviews, observations, and examination of documentary evidence;
- o purposive data collection (versus random sampling);
- o inductive (versus deductive) data analysis, a process of analyzing field data by coding and categorizing it to discover "embedded information";
- o theory grounded in the data collected (versus an *a priori* theory);
- o an unfolding or emergent research design;
- o meanings and interpretations negotiated with the human sources from which the data have chiefly been drawn;
- o idiographic (versus generalizable) interpretation of data--confined to these people, this time, this setting;
- o special trustworthiness criteria in place of the conventional criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity; and,
- o the case report as a reporting mode (instead of the scientific article as prescribed by the *American Psychological Association* (APA) *Publication Manual*).

The codification of traditional research rhetoric, according to Bazerman--most obvious in its chronological organizational strategy, a "freezed form" of title, abstract, introduction, method, results, and discussion--is found in the *APA Publication Manual*, which has become the style manual of choice for most, if not all, of the social sciences, including education. Bazerman argues that

> the official APA style . . . embeds behaviorist assumptions about authors, readers, the subjects investigated, and knowledge itself . . . [it] defines a rhetoric which grants all the participants exactly the role they should have in a behaviorist universe.[5]

Social scientists who have adopted the APA style may be tempted simply to follow the lead set by pre-established headings and subheadings and thus relieve themselves of the burden of developing a rhetorically satisfying or logically sound argument, the support of which justifies the use of evidence, or in APA terminology--"data" and "results." For these scientists there seem to be only results: the "discussion" section is frequently the weakest part of their article; the "conclusions," merely restatements of a priori hypotheses presented earlier. Bazerman comments that in the APA world "there is not much room for thinking or venturing . . . but much for behaving and adhering to prescriptions."[6] David N. Dobrin examines other consequences of the APA rhetoric: articles, because they are so much alike, are easy to evaluate; in addition, "material in one report can be used in another"--what Dobrin refers to as "linguistic fungibility."[7] J. Ziman argues, also, that the impersonal point of view and the use of technical language in the typical APA article suggests a pretension that the piece has already been accepted into the research literature.[8]

One of the most striking differences between naturalistic and positivist research, then, is in their respective reporting modes, with naturalists choosing the case report in preference to the APA-approved four-part scientific article. The case report mode has the following advantages, according to Lincoln and Guba:

> it is more adapted to a description of the multiple realities encountered at any given site; . . . it is adaptable to demonstrating the investigator's interaction with the site and consequent biases that may result (reflexive reporting); because it provides the basis for both individual 'naturalistic generalizations' (Stake, 1980) and transferability to other sites (thick description); . . . it is suited to demonstrating the variety of mutually shaping influences present; and . . . it can picture the value positions of investigator, substantive theory, methodological paradigm, and local contextual values.

The Problem

An increasing number of social scientists are electing to do research using case studies. W. Robert Kenny and Arden D. Groteluesche agree with Stake that a desire for "understanding educational phenomena" at least partially explains this "growth and expansion of the case study" approach.[9] But, despite its growing popularity, those who embrace and conduct qualitative field research are not always satisfied with their results and the results of their colleagues. Sociologist John Lofland comments that qualitative research methodology seems "distinct in the degree to which its practitioners lack a public, shared, and codified conception of how what they do is done, and how what they report should be formulated." He adds,

> [r]elative to other major traditions qualitative field research seems sprawling, undefined, diffuse and diverse--an amorphous residual grab bag and refuge for sundry types not fitting elsewhere.[10]

Lofland identifies report forms as the most important source of dissatisfaction with qualitative field research; he implies, in other words, that if qualitative research were better written it would fare better with critics, and the trustworthiness gap would begin to close. In attempting to place a proper value on report writing skill, Lofland says: "without denying the importance of diversities in epistemological persuasion, in collecting materials, and in procedures for analyzing them, reports and their forms also demand attention."[11] "Curiously," however, he observes, "manuals of instruction on qualitative field research devote little attention to forms of reports per se."[12]

Upon closer examination it appears that naturalistic inquiry, perhaps because it has had to struggle to achieve respectability, has become trapped between an old, inappropriate reporting mode (the four-part

scientific article) and a new one (the "case report") defined in only the sketchiest way. Stake, for example, argues that case reports should be written in a writing style that is "informal, perhaps narrative, possibly with verbatim quotation, illustration, and even allusion and metaphor."[13] William Outhwaite argues for a more ordinary, understandable rhetoric for social inquiry:

> The starting-point of social inquiry is some sort of inter-subjective understanding. . . . ordinary language is the ultimate meta-language of [social] science. . . . Where social scientists have strayed too far from 'common-sense' constructs, the result has been not greater sophistication, but trivialisation.[14]

Unfortunately, of the four characteristics of scientific writing ("APA reporting conventions") identified by Bazerman,

> (1) the use of an objective, third person point of view,
>
> (2) emphasis on precision, with mathematics as a model,
>
> (3) avoidance of metaphors and other expressive uses of language, and
>
> (4) support of claims with experimental, empirical evidence from nature,[15]

naturalistic case reporters tend to shun only "(2) emphasis on precision, with mathematics as a model," and "(4) support of claims with experimental, empirical evidence from nature." Though the purpose of characteristics (1) and (3) are equally to guarantee scientific objectivity, an achievement considered by naturalistic case reporters to be impossible (and irrelevant), objectification via language still lingers in their case reports. In other words, while shunning the obviously positivist characteristics of the APA style, they have unwittingly carried over into their prose constructions other marks of this reporting tradition: they tend to avoid expressive uses of language, to adopt an objective, third person point of

view, and to follow other scientific writing conventions, such as use of the passive voice. The official language of research in the social sciences also suffers from sentences bogged down by nominalizations, rather than enlivened by verbs, and sentences in which the agent is either not the subject of the sentence or is omitted altogether--all marks of what Joseph M. Williams labels academese.[16]

In a case report these practices, especially use of the passive voice and the third person point of view, result in an account which has neither emphasis nor clarity. Dobrin objects to the indiscriminant, pervasive use of the passive voice in any research report, not just naturalistic case reports. He notes that students are told that "where matters of fact are concerned, writers should use the passive voice." In reality, however, the difference is a "matter of emphasis, not a matter of fact vs. opinion." The use of a particular word, thus, "does not express objectivity."[17] Dobrin is even more concerned about the confusion over agency wrought by the third person point of view: "I can cite many instances where [using 'I'] would eliminate a clumsy construction or specify the agency when otherwise agency wouldn't be clear."[18] In most cases, Dobrin contends, "meaning is blurred; so is emphasis."[19] Reporting in the APA style also may result in a flattening of language, and, thus, an impoverishment of human experience--an outcome obviously in conflict with the fundamental assumptions and intended outcomes of naturalistic inquiry.

Following is a brief examination of two typical case study reports which illustrate the rhetorical problems created when case report writers retain some of the scientific (positivist) writing conventions.

EXAMPLE #1. Early in his case report entitled "Gifted and Talented Education: A National Test Case in Peoria," David M. Fetterman tries to

explain to the reader that he was selected to evaluate Peoria's gifted education program, but confusion results from his strict adherence to the third person point of view:

> The district decided to look for an outside evaluator who had experience in gifted education and a reputation for fairness, and the state agreed to look at the report.[20]

It is with some difficulty that the reader finally figures out that this "outside evaluator" is, in fact, Fetterman. Later Fetterman writes (in the passive voice) that

> once the value of the program had been established, an analysis of the referral, identification, and selection mechanisms was warranted.[21]

Such a sentence forces most readers to wonder: "Established by whom? Analysis warranted by what . . . or whom?"

Besides creating confusion over agency, report writers who rely heavily on the third person and passive constructions to avoid using "I" also find themselves trapped into fashioning illogical sentences. Fetterman commits such an error in the following sentence when he ascribes agency to the means or instrument by which he (the agent) has performed an action.

> A review of the specific referral, identification, and selection mechanisms in practice suggested that refinements were needed [emphasis mine].[22]

In the abstract to his article Fetterman states that

> This article presents . . . ,
> This case study concludes . . . , [and]
> The study points to . . . .

Elsewhere he claims that

> the evaluation pointed to the problem . . . ,
> the evaluation recommended . . . ,
> the evaluation also noted . . . ,
> the evaluation had to take these variables into account . . .
> overall, the evaluation concluded . . . .

Finally, Fetterman tells the reader that

> the evaluation's findings [not his][23] were presented to the school board [emphasis mine].

While Fetterman takes great pains to warn the reader against applying the Peoria findings and recommendations to other gifted programs--evidence he accepts at least one of the axioms of naturalistic inquiry--the language he uses to describe his own activities in this case study disaffirms that perspective.

In contrast to this objectifying and confusing rhetoric, Fetterman, when describing the activities of other people in straight subject-verb-object sentences, writes clear, engaging prose:

> Three television channels and a handful of newspaper and radio reporters covered the affair [Fetterman's presentation of the case report to the school board]. Cameras were rolling; flood lights and microphones were everywhere. The board heard a point-by-point report [note, however, that here he says "the board heard" instead of "I presented"] and then explored specific points in greater detail and asked for additional suggestions. At the subsequent press conference, some reporters pressed for a vindication of the city. Others viewed this occasion as an opportunity to strengthen the state's case.[24]

Here, because he is not the agent, Fetterman feels no need to slip on the familiar cloaking devices of third person and passive voice.

EXAMPLE #2. In a second example of a case report, "A Case Study of Citizen Education and Action," the case reporter, David L. Boggs, states that his purpose is to focus on the issues he faced in attempting to identify criteria for determining whether to assist citizen groups who combine education with social action and if so, in what form. Boggs seems so overwhelmed by the rhetorical problems he confronts in trying to objectify his own role in the case study, however, that he lapses again and again into a discussion of the issues his respondents faced in their opposition to a

major energy facility being built in their community. His case report, in other words, repeatedly drifts away from its stated purpose and deteriorates into synopsis and summary--probably because he finds it easier to say

> HART was a bootstraps operation. . . . Meeting rooms were hard to come by and inconsistently available.
>
> OR
>
> HART members studied the zoning ordinance.
>
> OR
>
> The bills died for lack of support.

THAN TO SAY

> Topics to be studied and sources of information continuously expanded.
>
> OR
>
> An early concern was that county residents perhaps did not fully appreciate their surroundings and their achievements.[25]

As a result of Boggs' approach to dealing with his rhetorical problems, his case study appears to be less important, to have less emphasis and significance, than his respondent's activities. In addition, perhaps not as important but more confusing to the reader, is his lack of clarity over agency. Too frequently the reader is at a loss as to who is doing what: when faced with a sentence with no context clues, such as "Newsletter articles had to be composed," the reader simply cannot determine who the agent is--whether, using the example, these articles were to be composed by HART members or Boggs himself.

A Rhetoric for Naturalistic Inquiry

If the goal of case reporting is to bring about understanding, any methods used should aim to maximize, or at least contribute to, understanding. Unfortunately, many of those doing case study research may confuse the expressive writing forms or strategies often associated with fiction with a fictive intent and thereby avoid some language usages and writing techniques and conventions that have the potential to enlarge the appeal, the understandability, and possibly even the authenticity of their case reports.

The constrained rhetoric of case reporting is not owing to a lack of rhetorical models and strategies. Narrative techniques, along with description and summary, have great potential value for the case report writer. Three types of non-fiction writing--the non-fiction novel, ethnography, and New Journalism--are even more appropriate models for case reporting because they reflect the underlying assumptions of naturalistic inquiry.

The term non-fiction novel was first used by Truman Capote in describing In Cold Blood, his penetrating study of the murder of a Kansas farm family. Much of Norman Mailer's later work, such as Armies of the Night, falls under the category of the non-fiction novel. Although Capote claimed that the non-fiction novel was a new art form that he created, earlier examples can be found, the most notable of which is James Agee's Let Us Nov Praise Famous Men (1941), an account of white sharecroppers in the South in 1936. To gather material, Agee and photographer Walker Evans lived with three tenant families for a period of four weeks. Agee writes that his subject is "American cotton tenantry as examined in the daily living of three representative white tenant families."[26] The following passage illustrates how artfully description can be woven into and support narrative movement.

> There were three on the porch, watching me, and they must not have spoken twice in an hour while they watched

> beyond the rarely traveled road the changes of daylight along the recessions of the woods, and while, in the short field that sank behind their house, their two crops died silently in the sun: a young man, a young woman, and an older man; and the two younger, their chins drawn inward and their heads tall against the grained wall of the house, watched me steadily and sternly as if from beneath the brows of helmets, in the candor of young warriors or of children.
>
> They were of a kind not safely to be described in an account claiming to be unimaginative or trustworthy, for they had too much and too outlandish beauty not to be legendary. Since, however, they existed quite irrelevant to myth, it will be necessary to tell a little of them.
>
> The young man's eyes had the opal lightings of dark oil and, though he was watching me in a way that relaxed me to cold weakness of ignobility, they fed too strongly inward to draw to a focus: whereas those of the young woman had each the splendor of a monstrance, and were brass. Her body also was brass or bitter gold, strong to stridency beneath the unbleached clayed cotton dress, and her arms and bare legs were sharp with metal down. The blenched hair drew her face tight to her skull as a tied mask; her features were baltic. The young man's face was deeply shaded with soft short beard, and luminous with death. He had the scornfully ornate nostrils and lips of an aegean exquisite. The fine wood body was ill strung, and sick even as he sat there to look at, and the bone hands roped with vein; they rose, then sank, and lay palms upward in his groins. There was in their eyes so quiet and ultimate a quality of hatred, and contempt, and anger, toward every creature in existence beyond themselves, and toward the damages they sustained, as shone scarcely short of a state of beatitude; nor did this at any time modify itself.[27]

Agee's purpose and technique may qualify his book as a non-fiction novel, but it also resembles ethnography, especially the ethnography of anthropologists such as Oscar Lewis, author of Five Families, a representation of life in rural Mexico as related through the minute observations of a typical day in the lives of five Mexican families. The boundaries between fact and fiction, between science and art seem mutable: Alexander Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch, a novel, represents life in a Siberian prison camp through the minute details of a typical day in the life of a group of prisoners. Robert Scholes argues that fiction does not lack truth:

all fictional possibilities are, in fact, "fragments of the white radiance of truth," which is "fragmented by the prism of fiction, without which we should not be able to see it at all."[28] Clifford Geertz claims that anthropological writings are "fictions," fictions in the sense that "they are 'something made,' 'something fashioned,'" not that they are "false, unfactual or merely 'as if' thought experiments."[29] Believing that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun," Geertz takes culture to be "those webs," and the analysis of it to be thus "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."[30]

The writing techniques used in the non-fiction novel and ethnography seem to result in powerful and authentic representations of individuals and their social milieu. An even more suggestive model for case reporting, however, is found in New Journalism, a movement begun in the mid-1960s that resulted in journalism that "strives to reveal the story hidden beneath the surface facts."[31] New Journalism involves the use of fictive techniques applied to the description of real events and real people. The New Journalist's relationship to the people and events described reflects new attitudes and values; more importantly, the form and style of the article or report is radically transformed through the use of fictional devices borrowed from short stories and novels.

Many people see a strong connection between social science and New Journalism. Robert Sommer observes that both "rely on participant observation as their major research method . . . upon first-person access to the people and places to be written about." He continues that

> what is 'new' is the descriptive phrase and its influence upon writers. Major figures . . . include the . . . maverick social scientists who are concerned with people in natural settings. Their approach is typically non-quantitative and anecdotal, with more reliance on the eyeball than the slide rule.[32]

New Journalist Tom Wolfe, too, sees this connection: in a letter to John English, he comments, "I use the methods and concepts of sociology, particularly those of Max Weber."[33] Hollowell points to another connection between the naturalistic paradigm and the New Journalism movement: "By revealing his personal biases, the New Journalist strives for a higher kind of 'objectivity.' He attempts to explode the myth that any report can be objective by freely admitting his own prejudices."[34] Wolfe seems to agree: "I think the New Journalism is . . . in one form both the kind of objective reality of journalism and the subjective reality that people have always gone to the novel for."[35]

There are other similarities between New Journalism and case study research. The basic reporting unit, for example, is not "the datum--the piece of information--but the scene."[36] Prolonged engagement--a hallmark of naturalistic inquiry--is also practiced by New Journalists, who stay with respondents long enough for scenes to unfold before their eyes.

Underlying the obvious similarities in the ways naturalistic inquirers and New Journalists gather and process information are the fundamental assumptions ("axioms") about the world--the paradigm or world view--shared by New Journalists and naturalistic inquirers.

To begin with, naturalists challenge the positivist assumption of generalizability--the possibility of laws independent of time and context; they aim instead to develop a body of knowledge that is idiographic--dependent on time and place.[37] Robert Sommer sees the same kind of disdain for generalizations in Wolfe: "Wolfe has no desire to demonstrate the generality of what he sees. Indeed his purposes are to emphasize the particular."[38]

A second assumption of naturalistic inquiry is a belief in multiple, intangible realities that can be studied only holistically, resulting in a case study that is likely to raise more questions than it answers. John Hellman discovers this same assumption in New Journalism, where writers "attempt to 'make up' or construct meaningful versions of the 'news' that continually threatens to overwhelm consciousness."[39] Hellman contends that during the 1960's, which gave rise to New Journalism, people were "less in need of facts than of an understanding of the facts already available."[40] Finding a fragmented reality," observes Hellman, New Journalists "avoid representation and seek construction."[41] As a response to a world of multiple, intangible realities, the New Journalist

> has chosen to use fiction as a way of knowing and communicating fact . . . because fiction . . . provides the most effective means of dramatizing the complexities and ambiguities of experience--the dynamic and fluid wholeness of an event as it is felt and ordered ('made') by a human consciousness.[42]

The New Journalist, continues Hellman,

> exploits the transformational resources of human perception and imagination to seek out a fresher and more complete experience of an event, and then to re-create that experience into a personally shaped 'fiction' which communicates something approaching the wholeness and resonance it has had for him. . . . The New Journalist wishes to use his imaginative powers and fictional craft to seek out and construct meaning.[43]

Hellman concludes that New Journalism is a "revolt by the individual against homogenized forms of experience, against monolithic versions of truth." The New Journalist seeks "new ideas and forms through which [he] can develop a new meaning, and therefore perhaps approach a truth [emphasis mine]."[44]

Finally, New Journalists concur with the naturalist's disdain for the possibility of value-free research. With regard to this fourth assumption, naturalists claim that inquiry is affected by values in at least five ways: (1) the investigator's and respondents' values; (2) the paradigm guiding the investigation; (3) the substantive theory guiding the investigation; (4) the values inherent in the context (location, culture, etc.); and, (5) all values resonating with each other. Hollowell states that the same assumption undergirds New Journalism: "the New Journalist . . . freely admit[s] his own prejudices . . . his personal biases."[45]

Even more important than these shared assumptions about the world, however--and the primary reason why the fictive writing forms and strategies found in New Journalism are appropriate for naturalistic case reporting--is the claim that naturalistic inquiry and New Journalism have a shared epistemological core. It is abundantly clear that neither the naturalist nor the New Journalist believes it is possible for an observer to maintain a separate and discrete distance from that which he wishes to know.

Naturalists believe there is an interactive, inseparable relationship between inquirer and respondent, between knower and known. In the following comment about New Journalists, John Hollowell uncovers the epistemological foundation common to both New Journalism and naturalistic inquiry: "The New Journalist strives for a higher kind of 'objectivity.' He attempts to explode the myth that any report can be objective."[46] Other commentators concur with this description of New Journalists. Michael L. Johnson reveals that the mark of the New Journalistic style is the writer's attempt to be

> personalistic, involved, and creative in relation to the events he reports and comments upon. His journalism . . . has no pretense of being 'objective' and it bears the clear stamp of his commitment and personality.[47]

Ronald Weber claims that New Journalists have "exploded the old, impersonal, objective journalism school formulas, to get closer to the human core of reality, to tell more of how it really is after the press agents and ghostwriters go home."[48] Journalist Gloria Steinam agrees that the writer "can only make sense of a situation by giving the human viewpoint, which is opinion."[49]

The objectivity/subjectivity conflict between conventional and New Journalism is seen by John Hellman as a "conflict of a disguised perspective versus an admitted one, and a corporate fiction versus a personal one." Hellman claims that the role of journalism is to "actively select, transform, and interpret" reality; but conventional journalism "refuses to acknowledge the creative nature of its 'news,' instead concealing the structuring mechanisms of its organizational mind behind masks of objectivity and fact."[50] Gerald Grant argues that such "objectivity may result in untruth . . . it masks feelings and stifles imagination."[51]

New Journalists, then, appear to shun the appearance of objectivity for much the same reason as naturalistic inquirers. It is in this final assumption about objectivity--concerning how people know and are aware of their knowing--that the most significant similarity between naturalistic inquiry and New Journalism is found.

Demonstration of the Proposed Rhetoric: Sample Case Report Segments

Because there appear to be many similarities, both in belief and action, between New Journalists and naturalistic inquirers, the writing strategies and techniques New Journalists employ would seem to be appropriate models to use in case reports.

Four writing devices have been identified by New Journalist Tom Wolfe and often used by him and other New Journalists. These rhetorical strategies help New Journalists, when portraying real events and real people, in achieving the immediacy or concrete reality found in fiction, especially in novels of social realism. They are:

(1) scene-by-scene construction (the telling of a story in scenic episodes);

(2) character development through full recording of dialogue;

(3) use of a third-person subjective point of view (experiencing an event through the perspective of one of its participants); and,

(4) full detailing of the "status life"--or rank--of participants in a scene (their everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture, clothing, decoration, styles of traveling, eating, keeping house, modes of behaving toward children, servants, superiors, inferiors, peers, plus the various looks, glances, poses, styles of walking and other symbolic details that might exist within a scene).[52]

Following are four sample case report segments that illustrate possible applications of these four techniques. The data chosen for treatment relate to a number of issues of varying degrees of importance that emerged during a case study of Landmark College.[53] This exploration of form rests on two fundamental assumptions about case reporting: (1) the primary goal of a case report is to create <u>understanding</u> (versus prediction and control); and, (2) unlike a technical research report, a case report should be--not a <u>record</u>--but a <u>product</u> of research.

<u>SCENE-BY-SCENE CONSTRUCTION</u>

The Black Flap, or When I Got Called a Racist (gulp)

Gordon Fisher graciously welcomed me to his tiny, but neatly arranged office and offered me a seat.

"There's not much space, I'm afraid," he said.

A slender, well-groomed man in his early sixties, he had taught composition for Landmark's English department for many years and, thus, could provide me with an oral history of both the department and the college. He was quite a talker and seemed to enjoy telling me about earlier days, when classes were smaller and students seemed smarter. He told me he was an artist as well as an English teacher and showed me the visual aids he had created to teach sentence structure.

"I'm a great believer in visuals, especially for developmental students," he said.

To help students "hear" their errors, he liked to read their papers out loud--with a dramatic flourish. Even though this technique "is very valuable," there are too many students in his classes nowadays for him to practice it.

The increasing number of students concerns him, especially the growing number of students needing developmental writing. He commented that "students don't like being sent down to developmental writing," so he likes to meet with them individually to tell them; but with the increase in the number of students, this kind of contact becomes difficult.

"Now it's hard to get to talk to them with so many students. It was a sad, sad day when we had to dispense with personal treatment because of sheer numbers."

Many English Department faculty members expressed a dislike of teaching developmental writing, but Gordon Fisher didn't.

"I love the teaching of it . . . but grading papers is a big bore, especially with developmental students."

The increasing number of Black students in his classes troubles Gordon Fisher, perhaps because of his failure to help them learn how to write.

"Black students are more likely to be in developmental writing than Comp 101. Blacks don't seem to value education as much as Whites . . . that makes for an intergenerational problem," he commented.

"Hum," I thought. And, I copied it down.

That was my first mistake. My second came months later when I included these statements on the questionnaires I prepared for faculty and students to fill out.

The first hint I had that anything was amiss came in a phone call from Brad Loftus.

"Nancy, we've got a little problem here. One of the department chairs doesn't want to give the questionnaire to students because of those two questions about Blacks."

"What's wrong with the questions?"

"Well, this person thinks Black students will be offended and think the questions are racist."

"That's ridiculous! . . . You and one of the department chairs read over the questionnaire before I had it copied and sent to faculty members to administer . . . did either of you see anything wrong with those questions?"

"No . . . but we probably should have given it to this other chair to review . . . that may be why we're having trouble now. He may feel like he's been left out."

"Brad, does he understand that those statements are virtually verbatim quotations from a college faculty member and that I'm merely trying to see if others share this view of Blacks?"

"I pointed that out to him. I also said, 'Don't you want to know the answers to some of these questions? Don't you want to know if we've got some problems?' But, it doesn't seem to make any difference. He thinks students will believe that the college is behind the questionnaire and that the faculty and administration are harboring racist attitudes."

"Good grief. I don't know what to do . . . I really need those students in my sample."

"Let me talk to the boss and see if she can convince the department chair to participate."

"Okay. I'll be down on Monday to pick up the first batch of questionnaires. Maybe things will have calmed down by then."

This conversation took place on Thursday afternoon. The following Monday morning, I walked into Brad's office a little before noon and discovered that far from having calmed down, faculty members throughout the building were in a low-level uproar over my questionnaire.

"Now a second department is involved," was Brad's greeting. "The chair has decided that none of the students in her classes will take the questionnaire until the controversy is settled."

Stunned, I asked, "What is going on?"

"Most of the developmental instructors grew up in Landmark and have degrees in elementary education. They're very protective of their students and probably do more mothering of them than they should. Also, part of what they're promoting to students is self-esteem, and they think your questionnaire threatens that. The non-developmental instructors may be more sophisticated about research, but it's almost like a kind of loyalty, or maybe the hysteria is contagious."

"I can't believe this is happening . . . ?"

"I talked to the Chair earlier this morning. She's going to tell the faculty to go ahead with administering the questionnaires, and she's going to talk to the other department chairs this afternoon."

Brad gave me the faculty and student questionnaires that had been completed and mailed back to his office. The first faculty response I looked at was not designed to put my mind at rest. On the page with the now notorious questions #63 and #69, I found screaming back at me the words

"Racist! Racist!"

And, on the back, was this accusation:

"This survey is biased and bigotted -
an insult to both students and faculty."

I looked at another faculty response. Here, next to item #63, I found this remark:

"Racist statement,
I do not like this question."

Speechless, I packed the surveys in a box and trudged back to the motel. After dinner, I started going through the student questionnaires, in the grip of a kind of morose compulsion.

In the first batch, taken from classes in writing and math, I found several students who challenged questions #63 and #69. One young man accused me of being careless: "dumb question, dumb question . . . As a Black student, I didn't appreciate questions 63 and 69. There could have been a much better way to word those questions. The next time you write a student questionnaire be more careful in what you write." Another young man took action: "I refused to answer questions 63-69 on the bases of the questions did not seem to have been asked in total fairness to Blacks. Furthermore, I feel the questions are totally unrelated in racial ways to this survey." A classmate was blunter: "This is a bull.... question".

A male student from the Study Lab also was offended: "I think the question that you asked were all heading toward Blacks and I didn't really like them. I think any Black person is just as smart as the next White guy, if not smarter!! I happen to be Black and live with a White family. They don't think I'm lacking in education, so why should I let you put my race down."

One young Black woman stated her simple opposition: "I myself disagree with numbers 63 & 69." Another challenged me: "On you[r] next survey, replace the Black students with the White student in their capabilities." Another asked, "Why is so many comments or put downs about Black students for ex 63 and 69?" Another commented, "To me it seem that they are picking on the Black folks. You making it sound that they are dum and they don't care about their education I think nomber 63, 69 are very offensive on the Black people."

Another young Black woman accused me of racism: "I strongly disapproved of the statments made in questions 63 and 69. If you didn't believe that your self you vouldnot have included it. What you have implied I don't feel is true because there are many Blacks with a higher education than Whites, nov and in the past. Education is a very important thing not only to Whites but to Blacks also. I want you to remember one thing, there are as many White bumbs as there are Black one. As for Landmark College I like the school because I was looking for a small school so that I can get my self ready for the real world before going on to a big college, and LC is really what I was looking for. The next time you make out a questionnaire please reword your questions when refereing to different peoples."

I looked around the motel room and felt the palpable presence of legions of Black students--all of them mad as hell at me. They didn't understand the purpose of my questionnaire; how could they? They were being attacked . . . again . . . and, to them at least, the attack was pretty much like it had always been. I began to see their faces--the anger and the hurt--and I felt bad in my motel room that night.

Later in the evening, after going over the questionnaires more carefully, I made the gratifying discovery that several White students objected to the "racist" questions.

One young White man commented, "this is petty," while another wrote "false . . . I feel your qeston is not necessary", and another, "very offensive."

Several young White women were outspoken in their criticism. One wrote, "I think some of your questions were extremely prejudise & un-called for! Just because a person is Black doesn't mean that they are not as intelligent as Whites. And it doesn't mean that they won't show up for class. They have as much right as an White or other to attend college. At least LC has a program to help in the areas that you are having problems in." Another commented on item #63: "This is offensive and racist." On item #69 she said, "This is also offensive."

On the up side, I had one student who wrote a simple, cheery "Hi Nancy!" and one who complained: "this town, where LC resides is BORING. It drives alot of people to drink . . . The campus food is also horrible." But another student claimed that he came to LC because of the "food." An Arabic student commented, more globally, that "everythings are good." But, to soften my optimism about the good-heartedness of LC students, I found that the last student questionnaire contained this bold criticism of the College:

"To many niggers."

After a troubled night, I returned to the college in the morning and sought out Dennis O'Quinn, whom I discovered I had met some years ago. I was lucky to find him in a tiny office trying to dig out from under a pile of student papers. I brought up the "Black flap."

"Nancy, this is really interesting! Conversation in the faculty lounge hasn't been this lively in months."

"What's going on?" I asked with a sinking feeling. "There seems to be a kind of mass hysteria that is spreading throughout the building."

"Well, the chair is just being cautious--she can't make up her mind whether anything is wrong with the questions or not."

"Doesn't anyone around here know the difference between asking for an opinion and revealing a prejudice?" I wailed.

Dennis ignored me.

"I was in the faculty lounge yesterday and asked a few of the faculty if they had seen national surveys with questions like these. I told them we'd look pretty foolish if these questions were, in fact, taken off a national poll."

"What'd they say?" I asked, hopefully.

"Well, it's even more bizarre than you think. One of the instructors and her husband think you are using your doctoral project as a ruse to spy for Lew Wallace Technical College and/or for the Commission of Higher Education."

"WHAT ? ? ?" I giggled. "You're joking, right? . . . You're not joking. . . . Well, what in heaven's name do they think I'm trying to find out?"

"They haven't got that far yet."

"I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING!"

Later that day I arranged to meet with the director of the Black Student Center. (I guess I was looking for an "expert" to tell me I wasn't a racist.) I found the Center on the outskirts of the campus in a little clapboard house built during a construction boom in the Twenties. Its new director, a woman counselor in her early thirties, is one of only three professional Black employees, out of over four hundred, at the college. This woman moved to Landmark a few years ago when her husband was selected to serve as pastor for a small Baptist church in the Black community. To supplement their meager income, she began working at LC three years ago as a part-time counselor, and recently was appointed to his new position at the Center.

With a triple layer of concern, that of a professional counselor, a pastor's wife, and a Black, the director readily admitted that Black students coming to Landmark College were more likely to need remedial instruction than their White counterparts.

"That's true . . . they're much more likely to end up in developmental," she stated emphatically. "Luckily, though, most Black students feel pretty comfortable taking developmental classes."

She told me about her ideas to improve the current developmental studies program.

"Peer tutors or student tutors are not appropriate," she argued. "Black students need more mature tutors. They need more than one hour sessions . . . more intensive assistance is needed."

She is troubled, however, by the overall lack of Black student involvement in campus life.

"Black students don't get involved in campus activities as a whole, such as student government or social activities. . . . That is a problem."

Her face clearly spoke, "I've got my work cut out for me!"

Having left the somewhat comforting atmosphere of the Black Student Center, I found Brad back in his office. He assured me that the Chair had asked all faculty to cooperate and administer the questionnaire.

She must not have much influence, though, for there was one department I never heard from.

Now, after looking over the surveys one last time, I have developed a kind of affection for the student who wrote,

"I personally feel that this survey SUCKS!!"

***

CHARACTER THROUGH DIALOGUE

Nita and Andy

Nita Murray and Andrew Potera had never met each other before; yet, their experiences at and impressions of Landmark College were remarkably similar.

Nita is a very pretty girl. Her face is framed by a curly mass of dark blond hair, and her tall, energetic figure seems like that of

a cheerleader. She has an expressive face--very open--and she gestures frequently when she talks. There is a kind of poignancy about her eyes, however.

"I didn't go to college right after I graduated from high school," she begins. "I went to work in an ordnance plant, but after a few months of that I knew I didn't want to do factory work the rest of my life."

"I was a B student in high school, but I didn't think much about going to college because my family was poor. I was a little embarrassed when my friends would say . . like 'I'm going to Purdue' . . . or . . . 'I'm going to Ball State' . . . I didn't want to say I wasn't going anywhere."

"But, when my brother got out of the service, he went to Landmark for a year to get his degree in Electronics--they gave him one year's credit for his training in the military. He liked Landmark and told me I would probably get financial aid and should try it. By that time I was really sick and tired of factory work, so I came on down."

"The first year at Landmark, I lived off campus in an apartment with my brother. I wasn't surprised to have to take developmental classes . . . actually, I was kinda happy . . . relieved that I wouldn't be thrown into hard classes right away."

With a sense of wonder, Nita talked about what she had learned.

"I'm studying computer science . . . I'm catching on pretty easily. The first semester I had to take Developmental Writing. That class was so helpful . . . I really learned a lot about grammar. I like writing . . . my grammar improved tremendously. I've got something out of my education at Landmark," Nita concluded.

At this point Andy, who had been listening quietly, broke in.

"This is total[ly] different from high school," he remarked.

Short and slight in stature, Andy wore tinted glasses. In contrast to Nita's expressive face and transparent feelings, his were a little harder to read. In addition, his voice was impassive, and his choice of language, understated. In his own way, however, he was eager to talk about the College.

"I waited a year after I graduated from high school. My mom told me I should come up here and take the basics . . . I'd highly recommend the developmental classes. They have a spelling class . . ." He shook his head. "It's remarkable."

A second year, learning disabled student majoring in aircraft maintenance technology, Andy is obviously pleased with his experience at Landmark.

"I've recruited six of my friends from high school to come here. It's a good school--you can't beat the price . . . and, the programs are good."

When asked about the social life at Landmark, Andy remarked, "They definitely don't have a strong school spirit." Nita agreed.

When told that college officials were worried that the reputation of the college would suffer if the developmental studies program became better known, both students expressed great surprise.

"After all, that's what LC is! This is where people come who don't do well in school," Nita explained. Andy nodded his head in agreement.

***

The Least You Should Know About English

Sitting at one of the tables, Michele was waiting for the developmental writing class to begin. She couldn't get yesterday's pictures out of her mind . . . the deep, vivid blue sky . . . the intense flash of yellow and orange as it exploded . . . the billowy clouds of pure white smoke trailing the wildly careening pieces of the shuttle.

She looked at her watch; it was five till eleven. Just then she noticed that the writing teacher had arrived . . . he was still holding an armload of folders as he walked to the front of the room and looked thoughtfully at the sixteen students who were seated in front of him--at tables that looked like halves of hexagons.

Michele didn't like the arrangement of the room, which was a long rectangle. The tables were lined up in two rows, one down each wall, and only one or two students were sitting at each table. Michele had chosen a seat in the back by herself. The tables closest to the front were empty.

She was still in a reverie about yesterday . . . she thought . . . if you hadn't known what it was, you would have thought it was so pretty . . . even when you did know, you had to admit it looked alot like some special fireworks display. The television was full of it last night . . . somehow it didn't seem right that they would show the relatives . . . she had felt uncomfortable watching their proud smiles turn to horror as they realized what was happening. "It's no wonder I didn't get this done," she thought. She rested her chin in the palms of her hands and tried to pay attention.

The teacher was taking attendance and handing back some graded assignments--an exercise on contractions and paragraphs from the previous class meeting. Michele was a little curious to see what he would have to say about her paragraph, which expressed her anger at having to take this remedial writing class.

ITS MY OPTION!

I was told in my Summer off after graduation; when I came up here, I would not pass Comp 101 (which was required for graduation) because of my poor marks in High School, SAT, etc. Which where I have to agree I goofed off until my Senior Year. They tried to put me in this 'beginning shit' which if I had taken, I would have been here for 4 years instead of 2 (associate degree??) since I would later be taking Comp, etc. They, I won't mention any names, Anyway he made me take a Test to get in Comp 101. He said I barely passed it: Anyway my point is - I'm paying to go to this place & I know I'm taking a risk of flunking the class - ITS MY OPTION. (You guys know you only want my damn money.) If a student wants a shot at Comp 101 or what ever he or she should be given the chance. I was denied the chance and now I feel screwed.

After handing back the student's papers and talking a little bit about some general problems with sentence structure, the instructor started a discussion of title pages. All the students were supposed to be working on an autobiography project. To prepare them for this assignment and to try to generate some enthusiasm for it, the teacher had described an autobiography recently written by a Chicago Bears' football player named Jim McMahon.

In her third semester of a medical assistant program at Landmark, Michele had a hard time getting excited about pro football. She looked at her paragraph again and was depressed by all the red marks, most of which she didn't understand: lc, **FRAG**, **Sp**, **Diction**, **CS**, . . . what does all that mean? "Oh well," she thought, "I'll just go to the Study Skills Lab to get help correcting it."

This wasn't the first time she had expressed her anger about being put in a developmental class. The previous semester she met with her academic advisor to plan her next semester's schedule, but ended up, instead, talking about Developmental Reading II, a second level reading course which she had just completed.

"Why did I have to take Reading II, which I did not need?" she asked. "My first semester here I took psychology and got straight A's on all tests and homework and received an A out of the class. Reading II was a waste of my time and money just because I had a low SAT score in the reading division!"

Michele slid back into the present. The instructor was asking students to comment about their progress on the autobiography project. Michele forced herself to listen to her classmates. When her turn came, she said, "Mine's not done yet . . . I'll bring it in Monday." She laid her head down on her arms as the instructor went on to another student.

After the discussion of the autobiography projects, the instructor introduced a dictionary assignment, explaining the various pieces of information provided by a standard dictionary citation. Just before allowing students some class time to work on their title pages, he collected the assignment that was due--the first draft of the autobiography.

While most of the students began to work at their seats, a couple came up to his desk and spoke to him quietly about special problems. Michele doodled on the back of her hand for awhile, then asked the student in front of her how long his paper was.

"Guess I'd better start writing this thing," she sighed to herself and then opened her notebook to look at her outline.

At 11:50 the instructor reminded the students that their dictionary assignment and title pages would be due at the next class meeting; then, he released the class. Michele thrust her "ITS MY OPTION" paragraph between the pages of her textbook, The Least You Should Know About English, slipped on her coat, and hurried back through the cold of a sunny January day to the warmth of the Pope Student Dining Center and lunch.

***

PUSH

There was no question as to what the "Continuing Education Building" used to be--the red brick on the outside and yellowing stucco walls on the inside, the wide central stairwell, and the creaky, varnished plank floors had the unmistakable (and undisguisable) look of an elementary school built around 1900. Having probably witnessed several generations of children scrambling into a little education before entering the local adult world of work or marrying and having children, the building has found new life as a sort of administrative annex for Landmark College, housing a hodgepodge of sponsored programs.

In the southeast corner of the second floor of this building, in what probably was a fifth grade classroom, is the office of a sponsored program called PUSH--Program for Under-prepared Students needing Help. PUSH is one of three federally-funded programs designed to help the college identify, recruit, and support disadvantaged and handicapped students who would benefit by attending college.

Visitors to the PUSH office are struck by a sense of clutter--not from neglect or sloppiness as much as the effect from constructing tiny offices out of temporary partitions and from what appears to be too little storage space. The secretary for the program is situated right next to the entryway and is alert to incoming visitors; there are, however, few amenities, including little in the way of a lobby or waiting area.

The Director of the PUSH program occupies a small cubicle on the east wall of the office area. A former nun and science teacher, Grace Weidenbenner has directed this program for six years. She has placed her desk against the north wall of her small office so that her back is to the door, making her seem somehow both vulnerable and approachable. On the thin walls of her cubicle hang motivational posters with sayings such as, "Ships are safe in harbors, but that's not what ships are for." To call her office "Spartan" or "utilitarian" is to flatter it. There is, nevertheless, dignity in its order.

Sitting at a desk upon which every item is quietly, but precisely placed, Grace speaks about the PUSH program with enthusiasm. A small woman with bright eyes, she conveys a sense of energy and action. She provides a clear description of how students become PUSH participants.

"In order to qualify, students have to meet one of four criteria . . . be the first in their family to go to college; or, be physically handicapped; or, be learning disabled; or, come from a low income family . . . for example, a family with one child and an annual income of less than $12,000."

Among the services that PUSH provides for students are "readers for blind students, notetakers and interpreters for deaf students, tutors for learning-disabled and other students, and counseling and moral support for all participants." Funded to serve 200 students a year, PUSH, under Grace's careful stewardship, enrolled 240 participants in the 1985-86 school year.

While Black students make up only 4.3 percent of the student body at LC, they comprise 30 percent of the PUSH participants. Grace believes that "minorities feel very comfortable" at Landmark. About relations between Black and White students, she says: "It's been good [though] we had some trouble ten years ago."

Checking through a stack of folders in her neatly arranged left drawer, Grace tries to characterize what PUSH students would praise and complain about. She quickly finds the surveys she was looking for.

"The teachers really care," she reads. "I can talk to them. Dr. McDowell [the college president] is available. . . . the food . . . too much interference in financial aid."

Overall, retention among PUSH students is higher than the LC average, according to Grace. Students sign contracts twice a semester, and Grace receives reports to help her monitor their progress and record it on a line graph.

"I've seen many students with low visible potential who came here and just blossomed," Grace volunteers with pride and satisfaction, pointing to examples on her chart. In explaining the overall success of PUSH, Grace concludes, "The personal touch is what does it."

***

Limitations of the Proposed Rhetoric for Naturalistic Inquiry

The new rhetoric proposed here for case reporting has, in Weber's words, "a special edge," and, to some degree, it distorts or magnifies life.[54] The good side to this effect is that the writing endows life with a shape or clarity that couldn't otherwise be detected, and it involves the reader in the experience. Journalist Nat Hentoff, for example, in describing Norman Mailer's particular brand of New Journalism in The Armies of the Night, comments that "it is not only that Mailer is so personally, so vulnerably involved in the events he is reporting, but also his involvement draws you in as no traditional news account possibly could."[55]

The bad side to this magnification or distortion of life is that the writing deflects and refracts the material "in the filter of the self." Tom Wolfe's work, says Weber, "bears his individual, idiosyncratic mark." In Wolfe's case, "it's not really the facts, interior or exterior, that we read

for but the fun house mirror . . . he holds up to them."[56] The trouble arises when the New Journalist wants to tell the reader about his problems, not his subject's. Harold Hayes, editor of Esquire during the early days of New Journalism, attacked New Journalists for their "assumption that the writer is at the center of events."[57] When New Journalists were attacked by Richard Schickel in Commentary for keeping themselves in the foreground at all times, Tom Wolfe took it as a criticism of the first-person point of view, and he countered that "most of the best work in the form has been done in third-person narration with the writer keeping himself absolutely invisible."[58] While it is true that many New Journalists eschew the first person point of view, as Wolfe claims, none manages to be "absolutely invisible." Herbert Gold argues that "the delight in self, the lack of delight in subject matter, implies a serious ultimate judgment which ought to be faced by the . . . journalist: What matters? . . . Does anything matter but me?"[59] Michael J. Arlen also finds something "troubling and askew in the arrogance . . . that so often seems to compel the New Journalist to present us our reality embedded in his own ego."[60]

There are other limitations to the proposed rhetoric. Wolfe himself admits to practical drawbacks and describes the various costs involved:

> Legwork, 'digging,' reporting . . . is . . . beneath [the dignity of the genteel essayist]. It puts the writer in such an awkward position. He not only has to enter the bailiwick of the people he is writing about, he also becomes a slave to their schedules. Reporting can be tedious, messy, physically dirty, boring, dangerous even. But worst of all . . . is the continual posture of humiliation. The reporter starts out by presuming upon someone's privacy . . . adapting his personality to the situation . . . being ingratiating, obliging, charming . . . enduring taunts, abuse . . . behavior that comes close to being servile or even beggerly. They are willing to cross the genteel line and head through the doors marked Keep Out.[61]

Besides describing so well here the practical limitations of New Journalism, Wolfe touches on a problem confronting both New Journalists and naturalistic inquirers: the ethical treatment of respondents. With regard to this issue, Judith Stacey sounds a warning for would-be ethnographers who are disenchanted with the "dualisms, abstractions, and detachment of positivism":

> ethnographic [research], by which I mean intensive participant-observation study . . . appears to provide much greater respect for and power to one's research 'subjects' . . . but [actually] masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation . . . [which places] research subjects at grave risk of manipulation and betrayal by the ethnographer. . . . The lives, loves, and tragedies that fieldwork informants share with a researcher are ultimately data, grist for the ethnographic mill, a mill that has a truly grinding power.

Stacey concludes:

> [E]lements of inequality, exploitation, and even betrayal are endemic to ethnography. Perhaps even more than ethnographic process, the published ethnography represents an intervention into the lives and relationships of its subjects. . . . the irony I now perceive is that ethnographic method exposes subjects to far greater danger and exploitation than do more positivist . . . research methods.[62]

The dilemma New Journalists and case reporters both face in trying to maintain integrity in their research, while at the same time safeguarding the well-being of respondents, is not easily solved and must be viewed as a serious limitation in <u>both</u> disciplines.

Another limitation to New Journalism may be its oversimplification of complicated events or issues and its failure to focus clearly on a subject. Film critic Pauline Kael claims that New Journalism is "non-critical," that it merely gets people "excited" about an event--they "are left not knowing how to feel about it except to be excited about it."[63]

Richard Kallan argues that Wolfe "constructs an appealing rhetorical reality wherein there are simple, absolute, almost 'hilariously' obvious

explanations for everything." This style, argues Kallan, "denies the wisdom of multiple causation since it dictates that single answers and explanations be given."[64] (This limitation in New Journalism marks an important departure from the assumptions underlying naturalistic inquiry, for naturalists argue that any assumption of linear causality is artificial, that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects, and that causes and effects have no separate existence. They hold, in other words, that all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping.)

Another subtle, but important problem in New Journalism concerns the distinction between fiction and fictive techniques. New Journalists apply fictive techniques to real people and events to heighten interest and authenticity. But, in using fictive techniques, they sometimes stray into fiction proper. According to John Hollowell, "New Journalists have . . . used such literary techniques as flashbacks, foreshadowing, inverted chronology, . . . to achieve the vivid and colorful writing usually found only in fiction." There are two additional fictional devices frequently used by New Journalists: the interior monologue, which Hollowell describes as "the presentation of what a character thinks and feels," and composite characterization, which he describes as "the telescoping of character traits and anecdotes drawn from a number of sources into a single representative sketch."[65]

New Journalist Gay Talese prefers using an interior monologue over full recording of dialogue: "I try to write it all from the point of view of the persons I am writing about, even revealing whenever possible what these individuals are thinking."[66] Where traditional journalists ask respondents what they did and said, Talese is likely to ask them what they thought in every situation. Tom Wolfe comments that when he and other New Journalists

were accused of entering people's minds, he responded "But exactly! I figured that was one more doorbell a reporter had to push."[67] Nevertheless, the use of interior monologue involves risk for case reporters. Besides the near impossibility of trying to represent accurately the running thoughts and feelings of another human being, there are certain ethical considerations: Is it proper to ask a respondent what he felt and thought when such-and-such occurred? Even more, is it proper to include such revealed thoughts and feelings in such a public document as a case report?

Composite characterization avoids the problem of confidentiality, but is open to criticism for other reasons. In Hustling, her 1970 book on prostitution, writer Gail Sheehy created, in what became a highly controversial use of this technique, a composite prostitute whom she called "Redpants." Composite characterization has been attacked on the grounds that the unique, idiosyncratic voice of one human being is lost in the merging of speech, appearance and mannerisms, motivation, and actions of many related characters. An even bigger danger, and a difficult one to avoid in composite characterization, is that of stereotyping. One has only to conjure up a composite "woman" or "black" to see the seriousness of the problem. With a stereotypical prostitute or English teacher or non-traditional student, the composite seems (but, of course, really isn't) less damaging.

The most serious charge against New Journalism, however, may be that because it is a hybrid form, it is vulnerable both as literature and journalism (or inquiry). Ronald Weber explores this limitation:

> However the New Journalists view themselves, what they are up to is neither exactly literature nor exactly journalism but a rough mixture of the two--and that's the heart of the critical problem. The New Journalism is vulnerable on both sides. . . . To the degree that journalism pushes toward literature it opens itself to attack both as second-rate literature and second-rate journalism, . . . a bastard form . . . exploiting the factual authority of journalism and the

> atmospheric license of fiction. . . . Its aim isn't to convey information . . . but create entertainment. . . . The result, despite repeated claims to accuracy, is widespread disregard of the New Journalism as serious journalism, let alone serious literature, and the inclination to view it as yet another branch of the entertainment industry.[68]

Needless to say, if talented, professional writers such as Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, and Hunter Thompson can be attacked for spawning both second-rate journalism and second-rate (or worse) literature, these same criticisms could, perhaps with some justification, be leveled against naturalistic case reporters who adopt their techniques.

Conclusion

The rhetoric I propose for naturalistic inquiry is fraught with problems and, thus, should not be taken as a prescription for future case reports because it is only a first step, not a completed enterprise. Many unanswered questions remain. Some implications for future research, thus, can be found among the tough problems I encountered during my project. Is it reasonable and practically possible, for example, for an investigator to guarantee anonymity for programs, institutions, or respondents? Can trustworthy data collection, data analysis, and peer review take place in a situation where anonymity has been assured? (Is the "constant comparative method" of data collection, for example, ethical?) Is the temptation of straying into the realm of imaginative writing too great to resist for case reporters who use such fictive techniques as the interior monologue, composite characterization, and the subjective third person point of view? Finally, is it really possible to ensure the integrity of "mutually-shaped" naturalistic case reports.

In view of these and other questions, case reporters probably should avoid the proposed rhetoric until further research supports its use. But because the alternative reporting strategy is so unsatisfactory, naturalistic inquirers may be eager to begin incorporating some of the techniques from New Journalism in their own case reports. The following measures may help them offset, perhaps even overcome, some of the inherent dangers.

The limitations of New Journalism are many, and they are not to be taken lightly. And, at least one of these limitations cannot be overcome: New Journalism is inefficient because saturation reporting takes a lot of time and effort. This limitation to New Journalism, however, is shared by naturalistic inquiry; it is, in fact, one of many ways in which these two disciplines are in harmony. As a result of the need for what the naturalist calls "prolonged engagement," this problem of inefficiency or cost in time and effort is one the investigator simply has to live with.

To guard against the danger of writing fiction when using fictive techniques, case reporters probably should avoid creating composite characters and, even more, writing interior monologues. The third person subjective point of view technique also has some potential for leading writers into the land of imaginative literature and should, therefore, be used with caution. (The three other techniques from New Journalism--scene-by-scene construction, character development through full use of dialogue, and use of status life details--do not have the same potential to lead the case reporter astray.) Following the dictates of sound research within the naturalistic paradigm (particularly satisfying trustworthiness criteria) will arm the case reporter against the danger of creating second-rate inquiry, while following the dictates of good writing (creating an effective structure and providing for unity, coherence, development, and

clarity) and avoiding techniques which tend to fictionalize events or people will provide some protection against creating second-rate writing. The problems of oversimplification and failing to provide an adequate focus may be fairly easy to avoid if the case reporter stays alert to these dangers.

The serious problems relating to both the ethical treatment of informants and the writer's self-absorption may be solved in part by the naturalist's normal process of mutual shaping--of providing for extensive review by respondents and other interested commentators. Case reporters should, therefore, continue to seek many reactions to their reports so that they may both safeguard the privacy of respondents and ameliorate or dilute the ego-centrism inherent in the techniques of the proposed rhetoric--to help them partly overcome the limitation that Ronald Weber describes as the writer's need "to drag everything back to his cave, to stamp everything, character, events, language, with the imprint of his person."[69] Reactions from respondents and other reviewers are likely to surprise investigators--some comments may fill them with dismay--but all reactions should be taken into account in revisions. Case reporters who "can't believe" the blindness or dull-wittedness of reviewers of their work and who insist on their own version of reality are urged to tape this message from Richard Hugo on their bathroom mirror:

> [Writers] who fail . . . are often [writers] who fail to accept feelings of personal worthlessness. . . . They resist the role of a wrong thing in a right world and proclaim themselves the right thing in a wrong world. . . . In a sense they are not honest and lack the impulse (or fight it) to revise and perfect.[70]

In this paper, I have attempted to demonstrate that expressive writing strategies, especially those used by New Journalists, may eventually serve as models for case reporting. To be effective in presenting findings, the case reporter must assume a new identity--that of the writer, who, observes Jacques Barzun, "contrives means and marshals forces that the beholder takes for granted." Barzun adds that when a writer speaks of his craft, he means "quite literally that he is crafty."[71] With proper safeguards, social scientists, too, can be crafty. Using photography as a metaphor for writing, Renato Rosaldo argues that such scheming is an unavoidable, even natural, part of any creative act:

> It is as if one imagined that photographs told the unadorned real truth without ever noticing hov they were constructed. Their images, after all, are framed, taken from particular angles, shot at certain distances, and rendered with different depths of field.[72]

Thus, it is by design that the case report may become not simply a record of experiences, but a product of the case study. And, it is through crafting the case report that the social scientist may become not simply an objective recorder of experience, but a filter through which experience is shaped and given meaning.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles Bazerman, "Scientific Writing as a Social Act: A Review of the Literature of the Sociology of Science," New Essays in Technical Writing and Communications, edited by Anderson, Brockman, and Miller (Farmingdale: Bagwood, 1983), p. 161.

2. Egon G. Guba, Introducing Qualitative Research: Concepts and Issues, (Athens, Georgia: Pre-Session Presentation at the Third Annual Conference on Qualitative Research in Education, entitled Diversity and Design: Studying Culture and the Individual), January 3, 1991.

3. This and other quoted items in the next pages are drawn from Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, Naturalistic Inquiry (Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage Publications, 1985), pp. 39-43.

4. Robert E. Stake, The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry," Educational Researcher, 7, 1978, p. 6.

5. Charles Bazerman, Codifying the Social Scientific Style: The APA Publication Manual as a Behaviorist Rhetoric, paper presented at the Conference on The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences: Language and Argument in Scholarship and Public Affairs, University of Iova (March 28-31, 1984), p. 3.

6. Bazerman, 1984, p. 30.

7. D. N. Dobrin, "Is Technical Writing Particularly Objective?", College English, 47, March, 1985, p. 249.

8. J. Ziman, Public Knowledge (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1968); cited in Bazerman, 1983, p. 158.

9. W. Robert Kenny and Arden D. Grotelueschen, "Making the Case for Case Study," Journal of Curriculum Studies, 16, 1, January-March, 1984, p. 37.

10. John Lofland, "Styles of Reporting Qualitative Field Research," The American Sociologist, 9, August, 1974, p. 101.

11. Lofland, p. 102.

12. Lofland, p. 102, footnote.

13. Stake, p. 7.

14. William Outhwaite, Understanding Social Life: The Method Called Verstehen, Controversies in Sociology (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975), p. 111.

15. Charles Bazerman, "Modern Evolution of the Experimental Report in Physics: Spectroscopic Articles in Physical Review, 1893-1980," Social Studies of Science, 14 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1984), pp. 1-2.

ENDNOTES

16. Joseph M. Williams, Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity & Grace, 2nd Edition, (Glenview, IL.: Scott Foresman and Company, 1985), pp. 2-13.

17. D. N. Dobrin, "Is Technical Writing Particularly Objective?", College English, 47, March, 1985, p. 248.

18. Dobrin, p. 249.

19. Dobrin, p. 251.

20. David M. Fetterman, "Gifted and Talented Education: A National Test Case in Peoria," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Vol. 8, No. 2, Summer 1986, p. 156.

21. Fetterman, p. 157.

22. Fetterman, p. 158.

23. Fetterman, p. 163.

24. Fetterman, p. 163.

25. David L. Boggs, "A Case Study of Citizen Education and Action," Adult Education Quarterly, Vol, 37, No. 1, Fall 1986, p. 6.

26. James Agee and Walker Evans, Three Tenant Families: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941), p. viii.

27. Agee and Evans, pp. 32-33.

28. Robert Scholes, Elements of Fiction (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. 3-4.

29. Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 15.

30. Geertz, pp. 5-9.

31. John Hollowell, Fact and Fiction: The New Journalism and the Nonfiction Novel (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 23.

32. Robert Sommer, "New Journalism and New Sociology Compared," in New Journalism, edited by Marshall Fishwick (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1975), p. 242.

33. Quoted in New Journalism, edited by Marshall Fishwick (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1975), p. 235.

34. Hollowell, p. 22.

35. Quoted in L. W. Robinson, "The New Journalism: A Panel Discussion with

ENDNOTES

(Endnote 35 continued from previous page)
Harold Hayes, Gay Talese, Tom Wolfe, and Professor L. W. Robinson," Writer's Digest, January, 1970, p. 67; reprinted in Ronald Weber (Ed), The Reporter as Artist: A Look at the New Journalism Controversy (New York: Hastings House, 1974).

36. Tom Wolfe, The New Journalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 50.

37. Lincoln and Guba, pp. 39-43.

38. Sommer, p. 243.

39. Hellman, p. x.

40. Hellman, p. 3.

41. Hellman, p. 17.

42. Hellman, p. 18.

43. Hellman, pp. 7-8.

44. Hellman, p. 8.

45. Hollowell, p. 22.

46. Hollowell, p. 22.

47. Michael L. Johnson, The New Journalism, the Underground Press, the Artists of Non-fiction, and Changes in the Establishment (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1971), p. 46.

48. Ronald Weber (Ed.), The Reporter as Artist: A Look at the New Journalism Controversy (New York: Hastings House, 1974), p. 61.

49. Quoted in Weber, p. 257.

50. Hellman, p. 4.

51. Gerald Grant, "The New Journalism We Need," Columbia Journalism Review, Spring, 1970; reprinted in Weber, p. 265.

52. Wolfe, p. 32.

53. Landmark College is a pseudonym for an actual institution. Certain non-essential features, such as appearance and location, have been deliberately altered to provide the institution with anonymity. For the same reason, some non-critical characteristics of respondents have been altered as well. The major issue overarching this study concerned the increasing tendency by many institutions to strengthen admission, performance, and graduation standards while, at the same time, extending college access to such underserved, non-traditional student groups as

ENDNOTES

(Endnote 53 continued from previous page)
minorities, re-entry women, displaced workers, and learning disabled adults. Several other issues important to Landmark students, faculty, staff, and the community emerged during the study.

54. Weber, pp. 16-17.

55. Nat Hentoff, "Behold the New Journalism--It's Coming After You!" Evergreen Review, July, 1968; reprinted in Weber, p. 51.

56. Weber, pp. 16-17.

57. Quoted in Elizabeth Peer, "New Journalism Now," Newsweek, Volume 85, March 31, 1975, p. 67.

58. Wolfe, p. 42.

59. Herbert Gold, "On Epidemic First Personism," Atlantic, August, 1971; reprinted in Weber, p. 285.

60. Michael J. Arlen, "Notes on the New Journalism," Atlantic Monthly, 1972; reprinted in Weber, p. 22.

61. Wolfe, pp. 43-44.

62. Judith Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1988, pp. 22-24.

63. Quoted in Wolfe, pp. 37-38.

64. Kallan, pp. 5, 10.

65. Hollowell, pp. 25-26.

66. Quoted in Weber, p. 256.

67. Wolfe, p. 21.

68. Weber, pp. 23-24.

69. Weber, p. 23.

70. Richard F. Hugo, The Triggering Town: Lectures and Essays on Poetry and Writing (New York: W. W. Norton and company, 1979), p. 70.

71. Jacques Barzun, On Writing, Editing and Publishing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 65.

72. Renato Rosaldo, Where Objectivity Lies: The Rhetoric of Anthropology; paper presented at the Conference on the Rhetoric of the Human Sciences: Language and Argument in Scholarship and Public Affairs, University of Iowa, March 28-31, 1984, p. 3.